The Athelstan Trust
Recruitment and Selection Policy

Date of Review	Approved by	Date of Approval	Next Review Date	Website
May 2021 May 2024 Jan 2026, Oct 26	Board		January 2029	Yes

Introduction and Purpose
This policy provides the approach to recruitment of employees and volunteers in the Athelstan Trust. To support schools in delivering this policy, recruitment templates are available in the HR Team.

This policy is also designed to ensure that people who are unsuitable to work with children, young people and their families are deterred and prevented from working within the school environment. This policy directly endorses and supports the mandatory guidance in the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education document. Please refer to Appendix 2 of the Athelstan Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

Policy Statement
The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment.

The Trust aims to ensure that recruitment effectively and efficiently supports the provision of high quality education. The Trust's objective in carrying out recruitment is to fill vacancies with people of the highest quality, drawn from the widest possible 'pool', cost effectively and without undue delay, whilst adhering to principles of fairness and equality.

Analysis of Post Requirement and Relevant Approvals
When a post becomes vacant the Headteacher will undertake a thorough review to assess whether a replacement is necessary and in the interest of the School as a whole and in light of its financial health and specific needs / objectives. Any new posts or recruitment outside of the budget must be authorised in advance by the Trust's Executive Team (CEO and CFO). Approval should be sought via the Recruitment Checklist Form.

Review of Job Description and Person Specification
The job description for the vacant post will be reviewed to ensure it reflects the requirements of the post. If there is no job description, one will be produced.

The job description will state:
- The main duties and responsibilities of the post
- The postholder's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young person.

The person specification sets out the selection criteria, specifying the essential and desirable attributes needed by the successful candidate.

These attributes include:
- Qualifications , experience and any other requirements needed to perform the role
- Competencies, qualities and values that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate, including suitability to work with children and the Trust Core Values.

Templates are available in the HR Team and should be used as the basis for reviewing and revising all job

descriptions and person specifications.

Advertising the Post

The Trust uses the MyNewTerm (MNT) platform to advertise all vacancies. This should be supported by other platforms to ensure the target audience is reached.

Advertisements will be appropriate, cost effective and non-discriminatory and will:

- Be based on the details in the job description and the person specification
- Be clear and precise such that they attract applicants to seek more detail, either from the post on MyNewTerm or direct from the school.
- Include the statement: 'The Athelstan Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be required to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check along with standard pre-employment safeguarding checks. As the role includes working with children, it is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Applicants must, therefore, disclose all spent and unspent convictions. References will be sought for shortlisted candidates before interview. Please also be aware that you will be subject to an online check (see information below) and that you may be questioned about the findings of such a check at your interview.'
- Include the statement: We are a flexible working employer, and we are willing to consider any reasonable adjustments you require during your interview so please ask us.
- Include all relevant information: job title, location, pay range, closing date
- Be supported by a recruitment pack, template available in the HR Team

Selection Panel

Membership of the selection panel should be diverse and inclusive to help ensure an equal and fair recruitment process. Where possible:

- Panels should consist of a minimum of three members;
- Will consist of a balance of genders;
- At least one member of the panel (and preferably more) will be current 'Safer Recruitment' trained;
- Conduct the whole recruitment process i.e. shortlisting and interview.

Panel members must declare any conflict of interest including prior knowledge of any applicant.

Shortlisting

All applicants must complete an application form via MNT. Applications will be shared with the selection panel without personal information.

Each member of the selection panel will score each applicant privately before the overall scores are agreed collectively and the panel agree a final shortlist of applicants to invite to interview. A shortlisting template with criteria based on the person specification is available in the HR Team.

Late applications will not generally be considered, and not once shortlisting has commenced.

The Equal Opportunity Monitoring Questionnaire on MNT will not be shared with the selection panel and will be used by the Trust for monitoring purposes only.

Shortlisting will be made by reference to the essential and desirable criteria detailed in the person specification.

References

Regardless of the post being applied for, two references will be sought (including one from the most recent employer) via the MNT platform prior to interview. This also applies to internal candidates. Where candidates do not have two previous employers, appropriate alternative references must be obtained, e.g. from education providers. References must be obtained from two different organisations: this may be a combination of professional and personal references. Any issues of concern can be discussed at interview.

In line with best practice safer recruitment guidelines, all references must be followed up by telephone.

On receipt, all references will be checked to ensure all the questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee will be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate. They should also be compared for consistency with the information provided by the candidate on their application form. Any discrepancies should be discussed at interview.

If a referee fails to provide a reference the candidate will be contacted to provide an alternative referee on MNT.

Online Searches

~~As part of the shortlisting process an online search should be carried out on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online, which may need to be explored at interview.~~

As part of the Trust's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, an online search will be conducted for all shortlisted candidates. The purpose of the search is to identify any incidents or issues that may be relevant to an applicant's suitability to work with children. Only information that is publicly available via the Trust IT system will be considered. Any concerns identified during the search will be explored with the candidate before an appointment is confirmed. Online searches will be conducted consistently following the standard proforma available in the HR team for all shortlisted candidates and in accordance with data protection legislation and the Equality Act 2010: information will be retained on an employee's HR record. Information that is not relevant to the recruitment process will not be retained.

Employment of ex-offenders

All roles at the Athelstan Trust are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Applicants for vacancies at the Trust must therefore disclose all spent and unspent convictions.

All applicants will be subject to a criminal record check from the Disclosure and Barring Service before an appointment is confirmed. This will include details of cautions, reprimands and warnings as well as spent and unspent convictions. An enhanced DBS (check) may also contain non-conviction information from local police records which a chief police officer thinks may be relevant.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar someone from working for the Trust. Criminal records will be taken into account for recruitment purposes only when the conviction is relevant.

Any DBS that contains information (caution, reprimand, conviction, soft information) will be reviewed by the Headteacher (or CEO for Central Team appointments). The Trust undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed. The Headteacher will take into account the following factors:

- Whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question
- The seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed

- The length of time since the offence or other matter occurred
- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or the other relevant matters, and
- The circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered of the offending person.

The Headteacher, in consultation with the Trust HR Team and / or CEO (or for Central Team appointments, the CEO) will then determine whether applicants' previous convictions or cautions etc make them unsuitable for the role. Where a candidate's criminal record includes offences and an offer of employment is made, a risk assessment will be completed by the school.

All shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete an Invite to Interview Checklist via MyNewTerm. This includes a request to declare spent and unspent convictions or cautions, pending prosecutions and overseas information. If an applicant is successful and it is found they did not disclose any convictions or other sanctions, it could result in dismissal or disciplinary action being taken against them. Any information candidates give will be completely confidential and will be considered only in relation to the job for which they are applying.

Assessment and Selection

Assessment and selection methods will be used to assess the candidates' suitability to the role and whether the candidate meets the criteria for the role. The selection methods used will be relevant, non-discriminatory and cost effective.

Appointments will be based on merit and the suitability of each candidate for the job, as evidenced against the person specification, and demonstrated by the selection methods. Appropriate and effective selection tools and processes will be used, and a range of selection methods will be considered in order to test candidates' suitability for the role.

All candidates will be notified in advance, with reasonable notice, of any test / assessment methods to be used.

Interview

Each shortlisted candidate will be invited to interview via MNT.
Each candidate will be asked:

- The same core set of questions and their answers fully noted. Answers may be probed further as appropriate;
- At least one question to assess safeguarding knowledge;
- At least one question based on the Trust and/or School values;
- Some questions exploring the candidate's suitability to work with children as well as their suitability for the post;
- Any concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or referee.

All interviews must follow Safer Recruitment practices, with at least one panel member who has completed the Safer Recruitment training in the last three years.

Decision Making, Feedback and Offers

When assessing candidates with disabilities, it is a requirement to consider their suitability on the basis that any reasonable adjustments that may be required have been made. Similarly, if special equipment is required the candidate's suitability will be evaluated on the basis that the equipment is in place.

Each member of the selection panel will record three positive observations and up to three areas of potential development and score each candidate at the end of each interview privately before the overall scores are agreed collectively and the best candidate chosen. A template is available in the HR Team. If additional selection methods are used, these will be fed into the decision-making process at the end, and the candidate who best meets the selection criteria chosen.

All candidates will be advised of the likely timescales for a decision and notified of the outcome of the interview as soon as possible. However, the selection panel will wait until the successful candidate has accepted the offer before informing unsuccessful candidates, unless they are clearly unsuitable for the post.

All candidates will be offered feedback on their performance during the selection process and an explanation of the decision, if requested. Feedback should be based on the selection panel members' observations and evaluation.

The initial job offer to the successful candidate will normally be made verbally and followed up in writing within seven working days stipulating that appointment is subject to satisfactory employment checks of:

- References
- Medical fitness for successful candidate only
- Qualifications
- An enhanced DBS check
- Proof of identity and eligibility to work in the UK
- Membership of any appropriate professional body
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 for eligible employees
- Original documents should be produced and a copy of these will be taken and kept on the successful candidate's personal file with the exception of the DBS check.

Where a candidate has spent time overseas, the candidate must provide a certificate of a criminal records check from any country outside the UK where they have lived for **12 months or more** (continuous or total) in the last **10 years**, while aged 18 or over. If this information isn't available, the reasons for this will be considered and reviewed and a risk assessment completed.

Complaints

Candidates who believe the recruitment process was conducted unfairly may submit an appeal within ten working days of receiving their outcome. Appeals must be made in writing and should clearly outline the grounds for review, including any relevant evidence. Appeals will be reviewed by an appropriate senior leader from a different school (or the Chair of Trustees) not previously involved in the original decision to ensure impartiality. The reviewer will assess whether the process was followed correctly and whether any errors occurred that may have affected the outcome. Candidates will be informed of the appeal decision in writing, normally within fifteen working days of submitting their grounds of objection in full.

Eligibility to Work in the UK

Under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 it is a criminal offence to employ someone without entitlement or permission to work in the UK. Section 15 of the Act requires all employers in the UK to make basic document checks on every person before they start work to help ensure that they do not employ illegal workers.

Employers are also required to recheck documents at least every 12 months if the employee has time-limited leave to enter or remain in the UK. Employers incur a significant fine if they employ an illegal worker. A new

offence of knowingly employing an illegal worker can incur an unlimited fine and / or up to five years' imprisonment.

To ensure that recruitment practices are not discriminatory, all short-listed applicants, regardless of their colour, race, nationality, or ethnic or national origin, will be asked to produce original documents as evidence of their right to work in the UK.

Where a preferred candidate requires a Skilled Worker Visa (previously Tier 2 General) status to work for the Trust the appointing officer will contact their HR Business Partner for advice before an offer of employment is confirmed.

Overseas Trained Teachers (OTTs)

OTTs are allowed to work as unqualified teachers for a maximum of four years without the need to gain qualified teacher status (QTS).

Details can be found in the Guidance from the DfE on Overseas Trained Teachers https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teach-in-england-if-you-qualified-outside-the-uk/teach-in-england-if-you-qualified-outside-the-uk

Appointments

Pre-employment checks

An offer of appointment to the successful candidate will be conditional upon:

- verification of the right to work in the UK (original documents will be seen and a copy retained
- the receipt of at least two satisfactory references
- verification of the candidate's identity (original documentation will be seen and a copy taken at interview stage)
- a satisfactory Enhanced DBS Check including barred list checks;
- pre-employment health screening;
- verification of qualifications (original documents will be seen and a copy retained at interview stage);
- verification of professional status where required e.g., TRA registration, QTS status;
- For teaching posts - verification of successful completion of statutory induction period (applies to those who obtained QTS after 7th May 1999) for newly qualified teachers (before 1st September 2021) or early career teachers (from 1st September 2021);
- If appropriate, declaration by the employee that they are not disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006 (see below);
- For qualified teachers applying for support staff posts - a check against the TRA registration list to establish whether the applicant has been deregistered from the teaching profession;
- a check that a person taking up a management position is not subject to a section 128 direction made by the Secretary of State.

Contracts of Employment

All employees will be provided with written details of the main terms and conditions of employment before their start date in post. This is known as the Contract of Employment.

The type of contract and the terms and conditions of employment will be clear and appropriate for the category of job and the needs of the service. If the contract is temporary the reason for this will be written in the contract.

Administration

All employment checks, including qualifications, DBS, identity and right to work in the UK will be placed on a single central record at the school which will be subject to Ofsted inspection.

Evidence of compliance with safer recruitment practices should be retained on the personal file. This includes a copy of the advertisement, shortlisting grid and annotated interview questions.

Volunteers

Recruitment of volunteers will be in line with this policy and all appropriate recruitment checks should be made on volunteers as would be done for substantive, fixed-term and temporary employees.